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UNCLAS HARARE 001643

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR NEARY

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TAYLOR/MUGABE; HARARE

11. Under headline "Curse of quiet diplomacy" the independent weekly "The Daily News On Sunday" dedicated its August 17 editorial to criticizing South African President Thabo Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" towards Robert Mugabe, arguing, "It was not quiet diplomacy which forced Charles Taylor to leave his country, Liberia." Excerpts:
12. "It was not quiet diplomacy which forced Charles Taylor to leave his country, Liberia, kicking and screaming, for luxurious exile in Kalabar, Nigeria. Both the president of the United States and the leaders of the African countries who helped the dictator to leave his country must have used rather loud diplomacy to make him an offer he could not refuse. The carrot of an opulently furnished mansion in Kalabar may have played its part in persuading Taylor to leave. The specter of his indictment on human rights violations by the United Nations could have had an impact on his king-size ego as well. But there can be no doubt that all the men discussing with Taylor the paucity of his options told him bluntly that the only way he could save his country - and his own political bacon - was to leave Liberia. The comparison with President Robert Mugabe's situation may be different, but not because he can contribute anything worthwhile to the survival of his country any more. Apart from inflaming his critics' passions with his rhetoric of blasphemy, there is precious little else he can do to bring his country back to normal. President Thabo Mbeki, who played a crucial role in getting Taylor out of Monrovia, must know that quiet diplomacy may work well with leaders whose egos may be normal in size, but that Mugabe's is nothing of the kind. . . ."

SULLIVAN